Spring 2007

Review of *The Biology of Freshwater Wetlands: Biology of Habitats* by Arnold G. van der Valko

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The Biology of Freshwater Wetlands: Biology of Habitats. By Arnold G. van der Valk. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. xi + 173 pp. Figures, tables, glossary, bibliography, index. $99.50 cloth, $44.50 paper.

Wetland ecology is a relatively new field that developed from an initial interest in a few direct benefits that wetlands provide to society. Consequently, much early scientific work was stimulated by economic returns from specific wetland services, such as production of peat and provision of habitat for economically valuable wildlife (e.g., waterfowl and furbearers). Over time, societal interest in wetlands broadened, and these unique habitats are now valued for many additional services, including some that bear nonmarket value. Common examples include carbon sequestration, flood reduction, water purification, and aesthetics. The increased recognition of the importance of wetlands has generated a diversity of job opportunities in wetland ecology and management. Despite the increased knowledge base and enhanced job market, I am not aware of any institutions that offer specialty degrees in this new discipline. Indeed, relatively few institutions offer specific wetland ecology classes,

with Arnold G. van der Valk and a few of his peers at other universities being notable exceptions.

The author designed this book as an introductory text in wetland ecology based on a beginning course he teaches at Iowa State University. Although the title suggests a strong focus on biology, the volume's scope is much broader and provides an excellent background for many student interests, including wetland function and ecological processes. The text covers many disciplines involved in wetland ecology, despite the uneven availability of information on specific topics within disciplines. This results in each section providing the needed overview about our state of knowledge without getting highly technical, as specialty or advanced classes require. Hence, students who plan a career in wetlands will need to supplement the information offered here with additional readings and study.

The Biology of Freshwater Wetlands covers the pertinent topics, is easy to follow, and will be of value to students just beginning their study of wetlands. While the author cites the most pertinent literature, the addition of recommended readings at the end of chapters would have been helpful in guiding students as they develop specific interests. The summary at the end of each chapter is useful, and the suggested experiments and observations ought to stimulate students to think more deeply and pursue additional knowledge. The volume is an excellent source of information about freshwater wetlands, providing wide coverage of wetlands around the world. Students of wetland ecology and management will find it of enormous value. **Ned H. Euliss, Jr.**, *Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center, U.S. Geological Survey.*